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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

8 September 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Modern Requirements for the Field Service Regulations

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article is a review of certain provisions of the 1963 Field Service Regulations pertaining to the ground forces which require updating appropriate to more recent developments in modern weapons and combat equipment. The author cites the LUNA-M missile system, the BM-21 combat vehicle, D-30 howitzer and improvements in tanks, antitank weapons, air defense, artillery and aircraft as developments necessitating changes in the Regulations. The chapters requiring major revision, in his view, deal with the fundamentals of combined arms battle, troop control, combat support, march formations, the meeting engagement, the offensive, and the defense. This article appeared in Issue No. 2 (87) for 1969 [redacted]

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2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned the [redacted]

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William W. Wells

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Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF INFO. Mid-1969

DATE 8 September 1976

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Modern Requirements for the Field Service Regulations

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 2 (87) for 1969 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel General of Tank Troops M. Nikitin. This article is a review of certain provisions of the 1963 Field Service Regulations pertaining to the ground forces which require updating appropriate to more recent developments in modern weapons and combat equipment. The author cites the LUNA-M missile system, the BM-21 combat vehicle, D-30 howitzer and improvements in tanks, antitank weapons, air defense, artillery and aircraft as developments necessitating changes in the Regulations. The chapters requiring major revision, in his view, deal with the fundamentals of combined-arms battle, troop control, combat support, particularly protection against weapons of mass destruction, march formations, the meeting engagement, the offensive with its component tactics such as encirclement, various types of attack, and antilanding operations, and defense.

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End of Summary

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Comment:

Colonel General of Tank Troops Matvey Timofeyevich Nikitin was identified as Chief of the Main Staff of the Ground Forces from 1968 until early 1974

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Modern Requirements for the Field Service Regulations

by

Colonel General of Tank Troops M. Nikitin

The radical changes in the materiel and technical resources of the army and navy have brought into existence new forms and methods of conducting armed combat which sometimes contradict the concepts of military theory and the principles of strategy and operational art that were formed in the past.

Opinions as to how the war will begin and what its nature will be have changed. In particular, it is assumed that there will be a non-nuclear period of combat actions accompanied by the constant threat of transition to the unlimited employment of all the power of nuclear means by the combatants, as well as a period of limited nuclear actions constituting a transition from non-nuclear to nuclear warfare.

As a result of the massed employment of operational and tactical nuclear weapons, modern ground forces operations have become intense, highly fluid and fast-moving, and their spatial scope has increased sharply. The operational formations have been given decisive objectives relating to the destruction of the opposing enemy. Attack groupings of troops have the objective capability of rapidly penetrating to a great depth and reaching the final objectives of an operation in a short time.

Fundamental changes also have taken place in tactics under the influence of the rapid development of modern means of destruction and various kinds of combat equipment. All these changes are recorded in regulations which must be periodically supplemented or rewritten from the beginning.

As is known, the guiding document in the field of tactics is the Field Service Regulations, which occupy a special place in the life of the armed forces. They serve as the basis for a unity of views on methods for the organization and conduct of combat actions by large units and units of all branches of the armed forces and branch arms. The importance of the regulations actually goes beyond the framework of the combined-arms battle. All other regulations that govern the combat activity of the

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troops and the principles underlying their training and education are based on the theoretical provisions of the Field Service Regulations, and they make the working out of these provisions specifically applicable to each branch arm.

All regulations documents, and especially the Field Service Regulations, must conform to the level of development of the means of armed combat which has been attained at the particular time. This requirement stems from F. Engels' thesis that "military tactics depend on the level of military equipment," which was advanced by V. I. Lenin in his article Lessons of the Moscow Uprising (Complete Collected Works, Volume 13, page 374). Each of the regulations represents a distinctive link in the development of military theory and practice based on a comprehensive evaluation of the state of the means of armed combat. It therefore is necessary that the regulations be periodically rewritten: the more rapidly combat equipment is improved, the more often they should be revised.

It is a known fact that during the second half of the nineteenth century the troops were guided by the exact same regulations for 10 to 15 years at a time. When the Red Army and Navy were created new regulations appeared that reflected the principles of the military art of the army of a proletarian state. These regulations remained in effect for four to six years until they required numerous supplements and had to be completely rewritten.

At present our Armed Forces are guided by the Field Service Regulations that became effective in December 1963. Immediately afterwards other regulations documents for the different branches of the armed forces, branch arms, and special troops were published. The theoretical basis of the Field Service Regulations and other regulations was considerably influenced by the thorough working out, which began in 1963 in the sphere of strategy, operational art and tactics, of the methods of waging war and conducting the operation and battle under conditions of the extensive employment of nuclear weapons. In all these documents full consideration was given to the state of the means of armed combat at the time, the views of Soviet military science on the organization and conduct of combat actions, and the belief of the probable enemy that a war against the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries would be a war involving the

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unrestricted employment of all means of mass destruction. The accuracy and relevance of the Field Service Regulations and other regulations have been confirmed by combat training and operational training experience and by the numerous exercises held in subsequent years.

However, more than five years have passed since the current Field Service Regulations were published. In this time what changes have there been in the equipping of the armed forces? Without attempting a comprehensive analysis of changes that have occurred throughout the armed forces, we will limit ourselves to a brief description of the development of the ground forces alone. During this period they have received into service a large quantity of new, improved types of weapons and combat equipment.*

Highly mobile, better-quality tactical and operational-tactical missile systems have been produced. For example, in comparison with the LUNA system, the maximum launch range of the LUNA-M missile system has increased twofold, the time required to achieve readiness for repeat launches has been considerably reduced, the speed at which the system can be moved has increased 1.5 times, the mileage reserve of the tracks and suspension has increased tenfold, and the fuel range has increased threefold. The nomenclature of nuclear warheads has been broadened and their operation and storage have been simplified; the number of warheads allocated to combined-arms large units for an offensive battle has increased 3.5 times in comparison with the years 1961-1962.

The fire power and effectiveness of tanks and their mobility and maneuverability have increased; armored protection has been improved fourfold and antinuclear protection has also been improved; the mileage reserve has been increased substantially (for example, 2,500 kilometers on tracks), as has the service life of the basic assemblies. Infantry combat vehicles have been produced and delivered to the troops. These are a new combat means that combines powerful armament and armored protection with great speed, cross-country performance and maneuverability. This greatly increases the fire and striking power of the motorized
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*This matter has been discussed in detail in an article written by Marshal of the Soviet Union M. V. Zakharov, published in the Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought" 50X1-HUM (86), 1969

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rifle troops and enables them to engage in combat actions at higher speeds and in close cooperation with tank units and subunits.

The artillery also has undergone[missing]changes. The D-30 122-mm battalion howitzer which has an all-round field of fire, and the BM-21 combat vehicle accepted into service both have excellent combat specifications. For example, the latter's range of fire is twice that of the BM-14, and the battalion weight of fire correspondingly has increased fourfold.

Antitank means have become more improved in terms of direct fire range and armor penetration capability. The probability of hitting enemy armored targets with the first firing of the new types of antitank guided missiles is as high as 30 to 50 percent, which ensures the destruction of all modern foreign tanks at ranges of 500-600 to 4,000 meters.

Particularly great changes have occurred in the equipping of troops with air defense means. New air defense means have been developed and have entered into service. Their effectiveness is considerably greater than that of previous models. The time required for bringing air defense means into combat status has been substantially reduced.

In recent years other combat equipment also has been developed. The introduction into the troops of more improved weapons and combat equipment has made it possible to work out a new organization for large units and units. The quantity and quality of armament in them [missing], and their combat capabilities are increasing. The number of missile launchers, the area of destruction, and the fire capabilities of artillery in killing personnel in the open and in combating enemy armored vehicles, are increasing. The capabilities of the air defense means of large units are growing immensely. The specifications of the aircraft in front aviation and of helicopters are being improved significantly and qualitatively new units -- airborne assault brigades -- are being activated.

By way of comparison it should be pointed out that considerable changes also have occurred in the weapons, combat equipment, and organizational structure of the armies of our probable enemies.

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When we analyze the current Field Service Regulations and their theoretical bases in light of the above, we are brought to the conclusion that they no longer completely correspond to the present state of the armed forces, nor to current views on the nature of the war, the operation, and the battle.

For example, the growing importance and feasibility of conducting combat actions with ground forces employing only conventional means of destruction require that these actions be worked out carefully and reflected with impeccable clarity in the Field Service Regulations, not in the form of separate recommendations. Also, it must be understood that combat actions with the employment of nuclear weapons and those without their employment are so closely interrelated that they cannot be examined in isolation from each other. Despite the fact that many of the provisions of the current Field Service Regulations are still relevant, this is no grounds for falling into the practice of inserting partial matters, which we are convinced will not be successful. To bear this out and to draw the attention of military theoreticians and practitioners to the most desirable directions for developing new Field Service Regulations which will meet current requirements, it is our opinion that it is essential, however briefly, to analyze several provisions of the current Field Service Regulations. Let us examine these provisions by chapter.

The fundamentals of the combined-arms battle. In this chapter the Regulations emphasize in every possible way the decisive importance of nuclear weapons and pay almost no attention to the possibility of achieving success by employing only conventional weapons. Present-day ground forces, which possess great fire power and striking power and have the ability to independently engage in decisive, highly mobile combat actions under any conditions of a situation, regardless of the nature of the war or the arsenal of combat means employed by the belligerents, will, in our opinion, have an extremely important role in the carrying out of major operational and strategic tasks, particularly when they are engaged in combat actions in which nuclear weapons are not employed, and also in the event of a prolonged nuclear war.

The provisions pertaining to the composition of the ground forces are out of date: they fail to take into account the

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existence of infantry combat vehicles, tank destroyers, airborne assault large units and units, and a large quantity of other powerful and promising combat equipment. In addition, many new elements of large unit and unit battle formations naturally are missing.

This chapter to a large degree determines the overall orientation of the Field Service Regulations and it is therefore unthinkable that it should contain any anachronisms or inaccuracies.

Troop control. Present-day combat actions impose exceptionally high requirements upon troop control. Experience derived from troop and command-staff training exercises in recent years graphically demonstrates that many very substantial shortcomings in troop operations are the direct result of serious omissions in control organized and implemented at the operational and tactical levels during combat actions. Detailed recommendations for regulations on this subject are highly essential. In the current Field Service Regulations, however, the main emphasis is put on questions of troop control at the time when decisions are being made and combat actions and their support are being organized, i.e. prior to the beginning of battle.

One of the causes of the discrepancy between the provisions in this chapter of the Regulations and actual requirements is the established system of utilizing control posts. We frequently observe the tendency of formation and large unit commanders to personally control the troops during combat actions, preferably from forward command posts, which have extremely limited forces and means. Moreover, the staffs usually are located behind the troops and are unable to fully carry out the functions of principal control organs. It seems highly unlikely that the forward command post could provide control should the command post be put out of action. In our opinion this task could be successfully performed by an alternate command post, but there is no provision for setting one up during an offensive battle. The Field Service Regulations lack essential recommendations as to the need to prepare each staff to control troops at the next higher level and at one or two levels lower should intermediate levels of control be put out of action. These matters require appropriate recommendations in the regulations.

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The Field Service Regulations correctly define the basic requirements imposed upon troop control: continuity, stability, and flexibility. However, at the present time accurate and soundly based calculations, efficiency of operation, reliability of information, concealment of actions, the application of mathematical methods and means of automation, and other requirements also are acquiring great importance.

Much that is new has emerged in the operating methods for troop control. The progressive parallel method, pursuant to which all command levels, after the receipt of preliminary and special instructions, quickly join in the preparation for a battle and an operation, is widely employed. The Field Service Regulations, however, recommend successive performance of tasks at the various levels. And, finally, concerning the methods of planning the battle and the operation, we are firmly convinced that there must be unified planning of combat actions in which nuclear weapons and conventional means of destruction are to be employed. The plan for the battle or operation must contain a detailed working out of troop actions during the non-nuclear period of a war, since more accurate calculations, especially for the destruction of the enemy by fire, are required for this period, and also a transition to the employment of nuclear weapons has to be provided for.

The organization of support for the combat actions of troops is one of the vital responsibilities of commanders and staffs. It is fully obvious that these matters must be treated identically and in sufficient detail in the Field Service Regulations and in other regulations. At present this requirement is not being adhered to. There is not even a single list of measures relating to the support of troop combat actions in either the Field Service Regulations or regulations for the branch arms. For example, we certainly cannot agree to the treatment in some regulations of air defense as a form of combat actions (Field Service Regulations - 1963) while others treat it as a type of combat support (Ground Forces Combat Regulations). It seems to us that air defense has come to be one of the forms of troop combat actions. Since the materiel-technical resources of field air defense have undergone tremendous changes and new means will be in direct subordination to combined-arms commanders, the regulations must contain specific recommendations regarding the combat employment of these means.

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It is highly desirable that the Field Service Regulations have a special chapter devoted to combat support. This chapter should contain a systematic examination of the fundamental questions of the organization and conduct of reconnaissance, protection against weapons of mass destruction, engineer support, security, camouflage, and warfare against radioelectronic means.

In particular, we would like to express some comments on the protection of troops against weapons of mass destruction. At present the set of protective measures includes mainly passive actions: warning, forecasting zones of contamination, changing disposition areas, using means of protection, etc. In our opinion the protection of troops against weapons of mass destruction must include active measures as well, and first and foremost the reconnaissance and destruction of these weapons. In previously published regulations, for example, the most important measures for antichemical protection were considered to be the disruption of the enemy chemical attack and the destruction of his means of employing toxic agents; this is an indication of the active nature of antichemical protection. This is all the more important since protection against weapons of mass destruction has become an integral part of the combat activities of troops, commanders, and staffs at all levels. Considerably more specific recommendations are required for the organization of this type of protection against means of mass destruction when combat actions are conducted with conventional weapons only, but under the constant threat that nuclear weapons will be employed.

Nor do the Field Service Regulations set forth with adequate clarity the questions of eliminating the aftereffects of enemy employment of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction. The futility of the attempt to perform this task using various organic and nonorganic subunits and detachments has been demonstrated by considerable troop operational and combat training experience. Its full weight falls upon the troops, and each time the commander, in his decision, must assign this highly important task and indicate how it is to be carried out. It is essential that the appropriate provisions be worked out and included in the Field Service Regulations.

Now that combat actions are highly mobile, there can be no doubt that the role of troop movements, and particularly of the march, has sharply increased. All provisions of the Field

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Service Regulations relating to the march have become extremely important. However, because of the overall theoretical orientation of the Regulations, which provides for troop actions under conditions of the employment of nuclear weapons, the primary concern is focused on matters of protecting troops on the march against means of mass destruction. The recommendations amount to deepening march formations, dispersing along the front and in the depth, and increasing the distances between subunits, units, and large units as well as the number of routes and the distances between them. Though all this certainly furthers the interests of protection, it also results in a sharp increase in the time needed by the troops to deploy from their march formations and move into action. For example, during exercises a division that performs its march using two routes takes five to six hours to deploy for combat, and a regiment takes 2.5 to three hours. The discrepancy between this and actual requirements is self-evident.

March formations that would be responsive to the interests of protection and at the same time allow rapid deployment of the troops and their commitment to battle must be carefully studied, tested, and adopted. In our opinion, one possible way of reducing the time for moving forward and deploying the troops is by judiciously decreasing the distances between the elements of the march formation.

In the Field Service Regulations the meeting battle is examined together with the offensive and the defense as a form of combat actions. This differs from the presentation of the problem in the preceding regulations, but it is not in accord with those provisions on the conduct of operations which treat the meeting engagement as one of the difficult forms of offensive actions. It has been demonstrated by experience that even at the tactical level it is undesirable to single out the meeting battle as an independent form of combat actions. In actuality, even as the enemy defense is broken through the repelling of the counterattack turns into a meeting battle, and meeting encounters may occur during all stages of an offensive battle. Meeting battles conducted by offensive methods may also occur in a defense during counterattacks or when routing advancing enemy reserves; these battles should be considered a form of offensive battle. The current Field Service Regulations also discuss the organization and conduct of a meeting battle when it occurs

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during the march of the troops. Experience has demonstrated that this classic variant is encountered very rarely.

The offensive. All of the provisions of the Field Service Regulations relate to the organization and conduct of an offensive under nuclear war conditions. This is repeatedly emphasized when the methods, speed, width of the zone, etc., of the offensive are specified. The organization and conduct of an offensive in which nuclear weapons are not employed but there is a constant threat of enemy employment of these weapons and we are in constant readiness to employ our own nuclear means, is not treated in the Regulations (except in a small section). And even in this section the recommendations are merely to reduce the width of the offensive zone, designate breakthrough sectors, and reduce the rate of advance and the depth of the tasks somewhat, and come down to the general conclusion that it is necessary to carry out more powerful preparatory fire. The greatest defect of the Regulations is the lack of recommendations pertaining to the organization of the transition from non-nuclear to nuclear actions.

The conduct of an offensive battle without the employment of nuclear weapons requires specific examination of the provisions pertaining to the breakthrough of a defense, the concentration of forces and means on the axis of the main attack, the organization of fire neutralization, and others. The breakthrough is an important and effective form of the negotiation of the present-day defense of our probable enemy, which is quite strong in terms of fire power.

Depending on the situational conditions, various methods may be employed to break through an enemy defense. For example, in our opinion a splitting attack can be employed successfully against a previously prepared enemy defense. This requires establishing a strong attack grouping of troops in a narrow sector and effecting a breach in the forward defensive area, which is equipped with a large quantity of fire and antitank means. The success of the actions will depend largely on the reliable neutralization of the defending enemy, using artillery fire and air strikes. A defense that is occupied over a broad front or is inadequately prepared from the fire and engineer standpoint may be broken through by means of splintering attacks. The division delivers two or three attacks employing the forces

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of first-echelon regiments, which requires establishing strong regimental artillery groups. Airborne assault large units and units landed in the depth of the defense may be employed to make the breakthrough of the enemy defense more successful in order to assist the troops delivering the attack from the front.

These and other methods of breaking through an enemy defense must be carefully researched, verified during exercises, and reflected in the new Field Service Regulations. The new Regulations also should set forth the fundamentals of the combat employment of a tank division when breaking through an enemy defense. In our opinion it is desirable to utilize the tank division in an area where the defense will have been reliably neutralized or where the densities of the defending enemy's antitank means are not high. Terrain conditions should be favorable to an attack and combat actions by units in the depth of the defense at high speeds. The division, as a rule, should be reinforced by rocket artillery and reliably supported by air strikes.

The Regulations do not fully discuss the questions of neutralizing the enemy by fire; they limit it to those areas and sectors where the defense is not destroyed by nuclear weapons. Obviously these provisions must be reexamined and worked out in considerably greater detail, possibly within the framework of the artillery offensive known to us through the experience of the Great Patriotic War.

In recent years many new fundamental matters of the offensive battle have arisen and they also should be reflected in the Field Service Regulations. Among these are the negotiation of nuclear land mines, actions of troops using infantry combat vehicles in continuous zones of radioactive contamination, the employment of large helicopter-borne landing forces, the negotiation of an antitank defense which is equipped with a large quantity of highly effective means, etc.

In our opinion, a number of established views on combat actions relating to encirclement merit reexamination; these actions, exercises demonstrate, continue to be one of the important methods employed even under conditions of nuclear war, not to mention the non-nuclear period. It is not logical that the questions concerning the battle in an encirclement and

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breaking out of it are adequately worked out in the Field Service Regulations, while combat actions aimed at encircling and destroying the enemy are not treated. We propose that in the new Field Service Regulations it would be desirable to set forth the conditions under which a motorized rifle division could conduct combat actions relating to encirclement. Specifically, a division, within the framework of an army offensive operation on terrain permitting enveloping attacks to be delivered, can also participate in the encirclement of enemy groupings taking up the defense with concentrations of forces and means on a certain axis. In this case the division has to organize and maintain close cooperation with the troops enveloping the enemy from the other flank. We do not exclude the possibility of the division being able to encircle tactical enemy groupings with its own forces and means.

In our opinion the matters of organizing and conducting combat actions by combined-arms large units and units to encircle and destroy the enemy require detailed research, working out, and reflection in regulations documents.

The question of offensive zones merits attention. The practice of designating offensive zones of different widths for offensives in the nuclear and non-nuclear periods of a war is not justified. We propose that this question be studied and that offensive zones of uniform width, in our view, be adopted: up to 20 kilometers for a division and up to five kilometers for a regiment. When nuclear weapons are not employed, however, the troops within the boundaries of this zone can concentrate their efforts on the breakthrough sector. The width of the offensive zone may be even smaller for a breakthrough of a strongly fortified defense.

The matter of assigning combat tasks to the division and the regiment must be refined if there is to be unified battle planning. The current Field Service Regulations provide for a regiment to be given in all cases an immediate and subsequent task and an axis of further advance. But for a division, when nuclear weapons are to be employed, are indicated an immediate task, an axis of further advance, and a task of the day, and when the battle is to be conducted with conventional weapons, only -- an immediate and subsequent task and task of the day. It is desirable for a division and regiment to be given identical tasks

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regardless of whether conventional means of destruction or nuclear weapons will be employed. The amount of time within which the tasks are to be carried out will vary in accordance with the means of destruction employed.

In our opinion, for the division and the regiment there must be defined their immediate and subsequent tasks and the axis of further advance. It is impossible to ignore the fact that under present-day conditions the "task of the day" has become rather indefinite since an offensive can begin or be continued at any time of day.

The defense. The Field Service Regulations and other regulations treat defense as it applies to nuclear war. And this is correct since a defense must always be ready to withstand enemy nuclear attacks. However, in recent years military periodicals have frequently suggested that it now is not as important to hold terrain since maneuvering forms of actions are acquiring great importance. We cannot agree with this. It is precisely the strong holding of terrain, the ability to withstand an offensive by the superior forces of an enemy employing any means of destruction, that must be the main requirement levied on a defense. This does not in any way rule out the maneuverability and aggressiveness of a defense, but emphasizes the requirement that it be impregnable.

At the same time, when setting up a defense one cannot fail to take into account the fact that the enemy possesses low-yield and very low-yield nuclear weapons. If the destruction of adjacent platoon strong points by one very low-yield nuclear warhead is to be avoided, we should alter the size of these strong points and the distances between them. This would entail some increase in the size of the company, battalion, and regiment defensive fronts. Preliminary calculations indicate that the battalion front will be four to six kilometers, the regimental front will be 10 to 15 kilometers, and the divisional front will be as much as 30 kilometers or more. Since the range of fire of the enemy 155-mm howitzers employing very low-yield nuclear warheads is about 15 kilometers and the fire positions are located five to six kilometers from the forward edge, it is advisable to change the distance of our forward positions from three to five kilometers to at least ten kilometers from the forward edge of defense of the main forces.

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The combating of enemy airborne landing forces and airmobile troops is becoming increasingly more important to defense. As these forces are developed the act of combating them outgrows the framework of an antilanding defense, and on the axis where they are massively employed will be one of the main tasks of a defensive battle. This matter also requires serious working out and substantiation.

An analysis of the central provisions of the Field Service Regulations from the viewpoint of the requirements of modern life demonstrates that many of them need important changes. First of all, the theoretical basis of the Regulations must be revised in the light of the state of the armed forces and the nature of the war, the operation, and the battle.

Tactics must be well conceived, truly scientific, and unified in theory so that troops guided by them can successfully engage in combat actions under any conditions and employing all available means of armed combat. The basic principles underlying this theory should be set forth in the Field Service Regulations and then given concrete form in the other regulations documents.

It is therefore fully proper to raise the matter of drawing up new Field Service Regulations and new combat regulations for the branch arms based on them. This is a large and complex task, but it arises from the requirements of life. For this reason it is essential to have the most desirable directions and ways of accomplishing this task discussed in the military press and worked out and verified by the scientific activities of the troops, staffs, military educational institutions, and research facilities.

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